

INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP. AN ANYLYSIS IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the correlation between element of soft skills and Islamic values among students in Higher Education in Malaysia. The sample groups are undergraduate students of Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN) – Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM) and Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNiMAP). The number of respondents is 480 people and distributed to the respondents using cluster sampling techniques and simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 for the mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation. The findings showed the significant and weak of correlation between integrity and entrepreneurship skills. Meanwhile, there is significant and moderate correlation between sincerity, trustfulness with entrepreneurship skills. However, data shows high ability in terms of mastery of soft skills such as entrepreneurship skills, integrity, sincerity and trustfulness. Lastly, proper attention should be given to this realm in order to further enhance the students' potential as well as to improve the performance of university.

Key Word: *Islamic Values, Entrepreneurship and Soft Skills.*

1.1 Introduction

Developments in East Asia, particularly economic development, have always been of interest to the world. The booming years of the first half of the 1990s saw analyses and interpretations of the so-called magical economics of the region. Government policies and strategies were hailed and perused for lessons to be learnt. Entrepreneurs were in the limelight too; cases were analysed for models to be emulated. The turbulent years of the second half of the 1990s drew cynicism and critiques of the region's so-called bubble economies. Government policies and strategies were criticised and scrutinised for lessons to be unlearned. And one again, entrepreneurs stole the show, albeit for the wrong reasons.

In both scenarios, the role of entrepreneurs featured conspicuously. In good times entrepreneurs generate the added impetus to the catalysts provided by the government. A munificent environment thus created stimulates more entrepreneurial initiatives, thereby sustaining economic growth. In bad times, however entrepreneurs bear the brunt and are partly to be blamed for overzealous expansion, overexposure and profiteering at the same time they too, are expected to help revitalise the economy (Adnan Alias, 2009).

The Institute Teknologi MARA (ITM), in 1975, established the Malaysian Entrepreneurship Development Centre (MEDEC), to help develop Bumiputra entrepreneurship. The national Productivity Centre prepared a management training package, in conjunction with MEDEC and the national Economic Research Development Association. In 1977, MEDEC launched a three-month long, part time, entrepreneurs Development Programme (EDP) and in 1981 a full time programme was introduced. The focus of the EDP was to help potential entrepreneurs, with new venture start-ups. The fourth Malaysian Five-Year Plan (1981-1985) provided 318 million ringgits to various agencies responsible for promoting entrepreneurship. This included the Agricultural Bank of Malaysia and the Development bank of Malaysia (Leo-Paul Dana, 2007)

The terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship have been given various definitions by management scholars and practitioners. Here are several definitions of entrepreneur and these definitions rarely agree with one another. The word entrepreneur is derived from the France word *entreprendre* which means to undertake or to try (Richard Cantillon, 1975). The word entrepreneur is widely used, both in everyday conversation and as technical term in management and economics. Its origin lies in seventeenth-century France, where an entrepreneur was an individual commissioned to undertake a particular commercial project by someone with money to invest (Philip A. Wickham, 2006). The word entrepreneur was widely used in Malaysia in 1970s after the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). A common definition of an entrepreneur is someone who establishes a new entity to offer a new of existing product or services into a new of existing market, whether it is for profitable or a non-profitable outcome. AN entrepreneur is an individual who able to perceive an opportunity for a business and create an organization to develop and manage that business successfully (Sarimah Hanim Aman Shah et al., 2008)

The term entrepreneurial competencies refers to key characteristics possessed by successful entrepreneurs in performing entrepreneurial functions effectively. Entrepreneurial competencies can be observed from the entrepreneur's attitude, internal life values or his insistence to perform with excellence. There are many competencies that are related to entrepreneurship. (McClelland and McBer & Co conducted a research on successful entrepreneurial at Malawi, India and Ecuado. They listed 13 entrepreneurial competencies possessed by successful entrepreneur, which are:

1. Personal initiative
2. Seize opportunities
3. Endurance
4. Information-seeker
5. High work quality

6. Commitment towards work agreements
7. Efficient
8. Systematic planning
9. Creative problem solving
10. Self-confidence
11. Assertion
12. Persuasion
13. Power and authority.

An entrepreneur should be motivated, confident, responsible and diligent. Beside these attitudes he should also be an information-seeker, risk taker, take personal initiative and possess mental and physical fitness. Among the major skills required by an entrepreneur are decision-making, problem solving, negotiation and communication, creativity, team work, management and technical skills.

From Islamic perspective, quality is a total concept. It encompasses not only relationships among human beings but also between human beings and Allāh SWT. In performing ibadah, khusyu' is the quality required in solah sawn khawas bil khawas in performing fasting, mabrur in performing haj. (Md Amin, 1996) reiterates that there is a close relationship between the quality of ibadah will stimulate improvement in the relationship between human beings and the universe. Quality in Islam begins with the quality of man. According to (Md Amin, 1996), the basic quality of work in Islam is based upon both slavery and khaliph values, both of which are harmoniously integrated. In Islam, ihsan encompasses sincerity and itqan. Entrepreneurs must be sincere in their duties (for the sake of Allāh SWT). Profit is not the ultimate aim. Itqan means excellence and is the benchmark. Thus, the combination of sincere and itqan is a positive quality in Islam.

In modern concepts of quality do not deviate from the Islamic concept of quality. The concept of continuous improvements and the ISO 9000 is manifestations of itqan. Emphasis on ISO 14000 in a manifestation of the harmonious relationship between human beings and the universe as advocated in Islam. Business orientation and strategy based on quality is also required. The quality of products and services stems from the entrepreneur's quality. A quality entrepreneur promises quality products and services. Such as orientation and strategy make up the essence of Islamic entrepreneurship (Azizan Abdullah, 2009).

2.0 Literature Review

Continuous improvements in the quality of products and services is emphasised to ensure business survival. In fact, quality is used as a business strategy in order to maintain the viability, improvement and competitiveness of accompany. It has become an important agenda in the world. In developed countries, particularly America and Japan, special quality awards such as the Malcom Baldrige Award and Deming Award have been introduced for companies that have successfully implemented excellent quality activities in their organisations. Malaysia too, has been stimulating the public, private and social sectors to adopt quality activities in organisations. The most prominent quality awards introduced in Malaysia are the prime Minister's Award, Product Quality Award, Quality management Award and Export Quality Award. These awards are considered motivating factors for organisations in Malaysia to emphasise quality management. Quality has become a global issues and therefore the understanding of the quality concept is vital. This forms the basis of any quality activity.

The ultimate success in any entrepreneurial endeavour depends on the personality, that is to say the composite characteristics of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial personality denotes the totality of the entrepreneur's and individual character traits, including attitudes, habits, emotional tendencies and

behavioural patterns. In fact, certain extraordinary personal traits not only constitute entrepreneurs but also serve to identify them from others. Entrepreneurial function requires certain distinctively special qualities and skills. Individuals aspiring to become successful entrepreneurs are expected to possess distinctive abilities, rather the requisite and skills, to achieve their desired goals (H. Nandan, 2007).

3.0 Problems of the statement

Entrepreneurship at glance

Entrepreneurship has been emphasised by some economists as the key figure in the process of economic growth. For example, according to Schumpeter, economic growth is determined by the dynamic function of entrepreneurship, and this dynamic function innovation. Although, according to some, the innovative function of entrepreneurship is not visible in multinational corporations and large enterprises, the basic contribution of entrepreneurship in moving the engine of growth cannot be denied. An entrepreneur runs the show of any economic enterprise right from the venture idea through the combining of other factors of production at the right time and the right technology to the final function of marketing. The scarcity of entrepreneurship may limit economic growth even if all other determinants of growth are available in abundance. Islam encourages entrepreneurship development for economic growth and well being of the human.

Motivation for entrepreneurship

Islam provides positive motivation for economic activity in order to earn a halal living. From the viewpoint of entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial sources of earnings, there are broadly two means of earning income: (i) working for others on the basis of fixed salaries/wages and (ii) undertaking entrepreneurial venture. While there is a provision in Islam for working for others in exchange of fixed salaries, the real incentive is for the development of entrepreneurship. Allāh SWT asks people to search for his bounties when the prayer is over. The word search is clearly something more than just working for others; “search” and “research” imply entrepreneurial activities to utilise whatever is available in the world for the benefit of the people, since Allāh SWT has created everything for their benefit and commended them to engage themselves to acquire this benefit by the proper use of all existing opportunities and creating new opportunities for the purpose.

In addition to such general instructions, entrepreneurship in specific matters are clearly mentioned and encouraged. Entrepreneurship in business is specifically encouraged so much so that a religious status is given to sincere and honest businessmen, such that a business entrepreneur of the desired quality will obtain a very high status on the Day of Judgment.

In economics, two motives have been suggested for entrepreneurial activities: profit motivation and achievement motivation. Economists have long been saying that the driving force and motive behind risky entrepreneurship is the desire for profit. Entrepreneurs take risks in business and industrial activities and hence it is reasonable for an entrepreneurs to receive all the profits. The entrepreneurs is said to be activated by profit expectations. In other words, the incentive or motivation for entrepreneurship originates from profit motives. If this is so, what is Islam’s standpoint in this context? The answer is revealed in the Quranic verse where Allāh SWT declares bay’ to be halal. Bay’ is broad word in the Arabic language which means to include any kinds of transaction, business or industrial activity -all of which are to make profits. Needles to mention, such bay’ implies entrepreneurship for making profits rather than salaried work. This involves two things: (i) entrepreneurship and (ii) profit motives.

Besides, the profits has also encouraged business entrepreneurship for earning profits. If profit motives believed to activate entrepreneurship, Islam has appropriate provisions for it. Islam is a religion founded on the principles of *tawhid* or unity of God the Almighty. *Tawhid* signifies not only the oneness of Allāh who is

the Supreme Being but also the uniqueness of all His sublime qualities. No creature can be comparable to any of His infinite sublime qualities for it is He who created all. Meanwhile *Khilafah* of vicegerency is a special duty of man on this earth. Man has been endowed with all the spiritual and mental characteristics, as well as material resources, to enable him to effectively undertake this important mission. Lastly, *al-adl* of justice is the rendering of trusts where it is due. Trusts here refer to all aspects of human life including economic, social and legal both at the individual as well as at the societal levels. These three basic principles form the world view of Islam which is manifested in all forms of human practices in all spheres of his life. A Muslim is therefore required to strictly adhere to the Islamic codes of conduct in all his activities be they in the realms of his rituals or his mundane affairs (Syed Othman Alhabsi et al., 1994)

Islam is a way of life that encourages entrepreneurship and agrees that ninety percent of an individual's income comes from business activities. According to the history of Islam, entrepreneurship activities started since the existence of Prophet Adam. Islamic history also proves that most of the prophets were involved in various entrepreneurial activities at the domestic and international levels. Through these activities, Islam successfully created and developed its own civilization (Sarimah Hanim Aman Shah et al., 2008). The prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) in his youth practised and implemented this system of entrepreneurship activities through trade based on the concept of *mudharabah* with his wife Siti Khadijah. In fact, He participated in all activities involving the development and implementation of Islamic entrepreneurship.

Islam has laid down certain principles and limits for carrying out entrepreneurial activities as prescribed by Islam:

1. To earn legitimate earning

Islam places great emphasis on the code of lawful and unlawful business transactions. Many Quranic verses disapprove the wrongful taking of property. A Muslim trader must ensure that he earns only through legitimate means. He should not only avoid illegitimate means in earning his provisions and livelihood but also stay away from matters that are dubious and doubtful.

2. Truthfulness

Trustfulness is a basic entrepreneurial ethical of Islam. Allāh speaks the truth, he commands that all Muslims to be straight forward and truthful in their dealing and utterance. Islam strongly condemns falsehood and deceits in any form. A businessman has to be honest, truthful and straightforward in all his business dealings. There is no scope for cheating, telling lies, swearing too much and providing false advertising in the Islamic framework of business (Khalid Ahmad, 2007).

3. Sincerity

Islam attaches great importance to the sincerity of intentions and actions in every walk of life. The performance of duties, to perfection, requires that individuals work with sincerity and devotion. Such ethical code result in more efficiency as well as high rate of productivity. Sincerity also discourage manipulation or exploitation of others for personal reasons. Accordingly a sincere business is not expected to cheat or harm others deliberately (Hanafy et al., 1995).

Islam generally encourages work, trade and commerce. Prophet Muhammad himself was engaged in this profession before he became a prophet. Prophet Muhammad was a successful businessman. Islam also regards entrepreneurial activities as a way of life in the present and hereafter. Islamic entrepreneurship dictates that the individual must first be a pious person, only then, he can become a practitioner. The benevolent person submits only to Allāh and through his vocation, he is expected to perform his duties as his way of life.

4. Integration of morality and economic activity

The importance of integration of morality and economic activity should be emphasised in all aspects of Muslim life including Islamic banking. Obviously, then there is no reason for unfair practices in trade. Islam forbids all anti-social economic activities which are of course not conducive to communal welfare. Thus all monopoly, hoarding and speculative business are prohibited, because all these are apposed to Islamic principles and take the advantage of the need or distress of their fellow-beings. The point is that in all economic activities permitted by Islam there should not be any exploitation or unfair dealing which may ultimately stand in the way of true brotherhood (Ramawan Abd Rahman,1997)

4.0 The objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to identify the engineering students on entrepreneurship skills and integrity at Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia.

1. To determine the mastery level of soft skills element (entrepreneurship skills) among students in Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia.
2. To determine the correlation between soft skills (entrepreneurship skills) and Islamic value (integrity) among students in Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia.
3. To determine the correlation between soft skills (entrepreneurship skills) and Islamic value (Truthfulness) among students in Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia.
4. To determine the correlation between soft skills (entrepreneurship skills) and Islamic value (Sincerity) among students in Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia.

5.0 Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design with quantitative approached. This study aims to identify the integrating Islamic values in soft skills element (entrepreneurship skills). Quantitative data for this study were obtained through questionnaires adapted from the MOHE (Malaysian of Higher Education Model 2006). The study sample are undergraduates of Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia. A total of 550 questionnaire were distributed to students and a total of 480 questionnaires were collected back from the respondents.

6.0 Research Instruments

The study utilised a questionnaire containing two parts, A,. Part A, consists of ten items related to entrepreneurship skills. Part B, C and D consists of ten items of Islamic values of integrity, Sincerity and Truthfulness Questionnaire used 5 point Likert scale in this study refer to: 1 =strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neutral 4= agree 5= strongly agree

7.0 Reliability

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the reliability test were used. Table 7.2 shows the reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of 10 items in the soft skills (Entrepreneurship) and 10 items of Islamic values (Integrity), 10 items of Sincerity and 10 items of Truthfulness domains which has been tested.. Chua Yan Piaw Dr (2010) suggests a minimum value equal to 0.6. All variables used in this study showed Cronbach Alpha values more than 0.6 indicating that the chosen item are consistent and reliable.

Table 7.2: Reliability Test

Items	Cronbach Alpha
Entrepreneurship Skills	0.735
Integrity	0.906
Sincerity	0.833
Truthfulness	0.822

8.0 Findings

Table 8.1: Interpretation of Entrepreneurship skills

No	Mean	SD	Interpretasion
B1	3.81	.780	High
B2	3.83	.762	High
B3	3.97	.736	High
B4	4.00	.739	High
B5	3.56	.958	High
B6	3.83	.728	High
B7	3.93	.721	High
B8	3.89	.703	High
B9	3.52	1.177	Moderate
B10	3.96	.767	High
Total	3.83		High

The finding in table 8.1 showed the mean of the ten elements of mastery level of Entrepreneurship skills possessed by students in Higher Learning Education, the analysis showed that the item B9 “*believe that economic factor are not the main factor to success in business*” (M = 3.52, SD =1 .177) is the lowest mean values.

Table 8.2: Interpretation of Integrity values

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
N Valid	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.06	4.17	4.25	4.29	4.19	4.20	4.29	4.24	4.20	4.28
Interpretation	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation	.870	.769	.740	.716	.726	.722	.732	.765	.749	.740
Variance	.757	.592	.548	.513	.527	.522	.536	.586	.561	.547

The finding in table 8.2 showed the mean of the ten elements of integrity values possessed by students in Higher Education, the analysis showed that the item C04 and C07 “ (M = 4.29, SD = .716) and (M = 4.29, SD = .732) which is ”do not abuse the power while holding the post” and” Liable for offenses committed themselves and not blame others.” Both the highest mean values possessed by the students.

Table 8.3: Interpretation of Sincerity values

		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
N	Valid	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.88	3.95	3.93	3.90	3.83	3.87	3.83	3.94	4.02	4.28
Interpretation		High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Mode		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		.699	.671	.701	.663	.690	.727	.716	.710	.749	.740

The finding in table 8.3 showed the mean of the ten elements of Sincerity values possessed by students in Higher Education, the analysis showed that the item C09 and C10 “ (M = 4.02, SD = .749) and (M = 4.28, SD = .740) which is ”I have a positive attitude towards myself” and” I have a number of good qualities ” Both the highest mean values possessed by the students.

Table 8.4: Interpretation of Truthfulness values

		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
N	Valid	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.54	4.53	4.43	4.38	4.48	4.42	4.44	4.35	4.22	4.33
Interpretation		High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Mode		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		.649	.638	.729	.702	.654	.738	.674	.697	.807	.741

The finding in table 8.4 showed the mean of the ten elements of Truthfulness values

possessed by students in Higher Education, the analysis showed that the item C01 and C02 “ (M = 4.54, SD = .649) and (M = 4.53, SD = .638) which is ” *I accept others when they do things I think are wrong*” and ” *I have a strong emotional connection with the people around me* ” Both the highest mean values possessed by the students.

Table: 8.5 Pearson Correlation between entrepreneurship and integrity

		Entrepreneurship	Integrity
Entrepreneurship	Pearson		.455**
	Correlation Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N		480
Integrity	Pearson	.455**	
	Correlation Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	480	

A Pearson Correlation test result shown in table 8.2 shows there is significant correlation between entrepreneurship and integrity. The null hypothesis can be rejected at the level 5% level of significance. We can conclude that there exists a relatively weak positive relationship between entrepreneurship and integrity. Those students with high entrepreneurship skills tend to practices integrity in their daily life and vice versa.

Table: 8.5 Pearson Correlation between entrepreneurship and Sincerity

		Entrepreneurship	Sincerity
Entrepreneurship	Pearson		.675**
	Correlation Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N		480
Sincerity	Pearson	.675**	
	Correlation Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	480	

A Pearson Correlation test result shown in table 8.5 shows there is significant correlation between entrepreneurship and sincerity. The null hypothesis can be rejected at the level 5% level of significance. We can conclude that there exists a relatively moderate positive relationship between entrepreneurship and integrity. Those students with high entrepreneurship skills tend to practices sincerity in their daily life and vice versa.

Table: 8.6 Pearson Correlation between entrepreneurship and Truthfulness

		Entrepreneurship	Truthfulness
Entrepreneurship	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed)		.631**
	N		480
Truthfulness	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed)	.631**	.000
	N	480	

A Pearson Correlation test result shown in table 8.6 shows there is significant correlation between entrepreneurship and Truthfulness. The null hypothesis can be rejected at the level 5% level of significance. We can conclude that there exists a relatively moderate positive relationship between entrepreneurship and integrity. Those students with high entrepreneurship skills tend to practices truthfulness in their daily life and vice versa.

9.0 Conclusion

As conclusion, any kind of Islamic entrepreneurship is ultimately based on *aqidah*, *syariah* and *akhlak*. *Aqidah* touches on fait of belief while *syariah* focuses on the guidelines for human activity, that is *muamalat*, *al-maliah*, *al-toharah* and *ibadah*. *Akhlak* emphasizes on Muslim conduct and behaviour. As a Muslim entrepreneur, *aqidah*, *syariah* and *akhlak* cannot be treated separately, but rather done simultaneously. Everything in this world belongs to Allāh. As such an individual's life and wealth belongs to Him, as God created them. Islam looks at an individual as a whole. One is required to submit himself completely to Allāh.as stated in the al-Qur'ān. The result of the submission is that all of one's activities should conform to the instructions of Allāh, to whom the person is submitting to. Islam being a complete way of life requires that its followers follow every aspect of their life according to its teachings.

The goal of a Muslim entrepreneur is to achieve success worldly and in the hereafter. A Muslim entrepreneur must be a person who is eager to seek excellence. This may lead to an increase in the quality of job performed by him. Success means to achieve what is desired, happiness in both worlds, prosperity, free from worries, difficulties or mental anguish. Success in Islam emphasizes both profit and *barakah*. This is the meaning of success in Islam whereby any success achieved in life on earth will contribute as a success in the hereafter as long as the success had been achieved within the guidance of God. Hence, there is no dichotomy between efforts made for worldly developments and preparation for life in hereafter. In carrying out business activities like production, selling, services, trading, manufacturing, dealing with customers and any kind of business in order to earn a living must conform to Islamic rules.

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